

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to express my support for House Bill 4087.

As a member of the Genesee County Board of Health, I work with a team whose mission is to improve the quality of life for county residents by promoting health, preventing disease and protecting the environment. Reducing tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke is critical to achieving this goal.

We send our children off to college to gain knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. By allowing smoking in dorms, we not only put students in harms way, but we condone a practice that defies the collective knowledge that has resulted from years of research.

The scientific evidence is indisputable: Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S. and exposure to second hand smoke is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and death.

According to the 2005 Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, the prevalence of smoking by age is second highest among college-age students (ages 18-24). Thirty one percent of college students use tobacco. Other age groups are decreasing tobacco use, while college students are smoking at a greater rate.

A study by the Harvard School of Public Health (2001) found that non-smokers are 40% less likely to become smokers if they live in smoke-free dorms.

I know first hand how seductive smoking can be to a college student. As an eighteen year student, I imitated my classmates by learning to smoke. It took several years and a lot of misery to successfully quit. I want something better for my children and grandchildren.

Our college students will seek employment in a world that will wisely no longer allow smoking the workplace. They will also live in communities where smoking is not tolerated in public places.

Currently 90% of Michigan public 4 year colleges and university have smoke-free dormitories. We need to close the door to the practice once and for all. Providing a clean and safe residential environment for students just makes good sense.

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